



Placer County Health and Human Services Department

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September 25, 2009

Dear Fellow Placer County Residents,

The pandemic H1N1 influenza virus ("swine flu") is currently active in Placer County and is anticipated to circulate even more during the fall and into next year. This flu is spreading easily from person to person – some estimates predict that as many as 100,000 Placer residents could become infected within the next year. While it remains a relatively mild illness for most individuals, it can be quite disruptive to our daily lives. And H1N1 flu **can result in more serious illness** in those at higher risk for complications, including children younger than 5 years old, adults 65 years and older, pregnant women, persons with certain chronic medical conditions (such as lung or heart disease, diabetes, or kidney disease), those with immunosuppressive conditions, and persons younger than 19 years of age who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy.

We are working directly with schools, health care, and other groups to be as well prepared as possible. We are asking for **your assistance** to reduce the spread of influenza in our county – this is the key to preventing H1N1 flu in yourself, your loved ones, and our community. The following recommendations to reduce the spread of the virus follow those most recently provided by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention:

- Anyone sick with a flu-like illness should remain home from work, school, and community activities except to obtain medical care or other necessities and should limit contact with other people while at home. Once an individual is feeling better and has stopped all fever reducing medicine, they should continue to monitor their temperature and remain home until they have been free of fever for at least 24 hours.
- **Cover your nose and mouth** with a tissue when you cough or sneeze and then throw it away. If tissues aren't available, cough into your elbow or sleeve (**not** your hand).
- **Wash hands often** with soap and water, especially after coughing or sneezing. Alcohol-based hand cleaners containing at least 60% alcohol are also effective.
- **Avoid touching** your eyes, nose and mouth to avoid spreading germs.
- **Avoid close contact** with people who are sick (hand holding, hugging, kissing, etc).
- **Avoid sharing items** such as food, drinks, and lip gloss with others.

A **vaccine for H1N1 flu** is currently in production and is projected to be available after October 15th. Be looking for opportunities to get immunized when the vaccine becomes available, whether from your health care provider, in the community, or in other settings. If you are interested in being a **volunteer** at County-run H1N1 flu vaccine clinics, most of which will be in school settings, please look for opportunities from your child's school (if you're a parent), watch <http://www.placer.ca.gov/> for information, or simply call us at (530) 889-7141. Both health professionals who can administer vaccine and those without medical training are needed to volunteer.

Perspective, Hope, and Opportunity

And don't forget to get your **seasonal flu vaccine** soon – both vaccines are important.

If you develop **symptoms** of the flu, such as fever with cough, sore throat, body aches, headache, fatigue, diarrhea or vomiting, please stay home, rest, drink plenty of fluids, and limit your contact with others. The vast majority of people won't need medical care and will recover at home without testing or antiviral treatment. Antiviral medications are recommended only in specific situations, such as for those individuals that are at higher risk for complications (listed in the next paragraph). Testing for the H1N1 flu is currently recommended only for hospitalized patients. Remember that aspirin should not be given to children or teenagers who have the flu because it can cause a rare but serious illness called Reye's syndrome.

If you or a family member are at higher risk for complications, including children younger than 5 years old, adults 65 years and older, pregnant women, persons with certain chronic medical conditions (such as lung or heart disease, diabetes, or kidney disease), those with immunosuppressive conditions, and persons younger than 19 years of age who are receiving long-term aspirin therapy, **you should contact your health care provider as soon as flu symptoms develop** so he or she can determine whether you need medical care, testing or treatment. Better yet, contact your health care provider now if you are in a higher risk group to **discuss your level of risk and to develop a plan** for what you should do if you get flu symptoms.

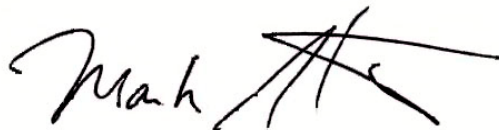
Concise **guidance sheets** for H1N1 influenza in specific settings (e.g., schools, daycare, sports teams, faith community, inpatient facilities, outpatient clinics) and many other resources on H1N1 can be found at <http://www.placer.ca.gov/> -- simply click the "**H1N1 Information**" link.

For other up-to-date **information**, visit the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services web site, www.flu.gov, the California Department of Public Health web site, www.cdph.ca.gov, or you can call the Placer County Flu Telephone Line (1-530-889-7161) or the State toll-free hotline (1-888-865-0564).

Sincerely,



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